

**Introduced by Senator Walters  
(Coauthor: Senator La Malfa)**

February 22, 2012

---

An act to amend Section 35401.5 of the Vehicle Code, relating to vehicles.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1174, as introduced, Walters. Vehicles: length semitrailers: exemption: motorsports.

Existing law authorizes the Department of Transportation or local authorities, with regard to highways under their respective jurisdiction, to issue a special permit authorizing the operation of a combination of vehicles consisting of a truck tractor semitrailer combination with a maximum length from kingpin to rearmost axle measurement of not more than 46 feet, if the trailers are used exclusively or primarily in connection with motorsports, as defined.

This bill would instead exempt a combination of vehicles consisting of a truck tractor and semitrailer, or of a truck tractor, semitrailer, and trailer, from all limitations on the length of trailers if the trailer is used exclusively or primarily in connection with motorsports, as defined.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 35401.5 of the Vehicle Code is amended
- 2 to read:
- 3 35401.5. (a) A combination of vehicles consisting of a truck
- 4 tractor and semitrailer, or of a truck tractor, semitrailer, and trailer,

1 is not subject to the limitations of Sections 35400 and 35401, when  
2 operating on the National System of Interstate and Defense  
3 Highways or when using those portions of federal-aid primary  
4 system highways that have been qualified by the United States  
5 Secretary of Transportation for that use, or when using routes  
6 appropriately identified by the Department of Transportation or  
7 local authorities as provided in subdivision (c) or (d), if all of the  
8 following conditions are met:

9 (1) The length of the semitrailer in exclusive combination with  
10 a truck tractor does not exceed 48 feet. A semitrailer not more than  
11 53 feet in length shall satisfy this requirement when configured  
12 with two or more rear axles, the rearmost of which is located 40  
13 feet or less from the kingpin or when configured with a single axle  
14 which is located 38 feet or less from the kingpin. For purposes of  
15 this paragraph, a motortruck used in combination with a semitrailer,  
16 when that combination of vehicles is engaged solely in the  
17 transportation of motor vehicles, camper units, or boats, is  
18 considered to be a truck tractor.

19 (2) Neither the length of the semitrailer nor the length of the  
20 trailer when simultaneously in combination with a truck tractor  
21 exceeds 28 feet 6 inches.

22 (b) Subdivisions (b), (d), and (e) of Section 35402 do not apply  
23 to combinations of vehicles operated subject to the exemptions  
24 provided by this section.

25 (c) Combinations of vehicles operated pursuant to subdivision  
26 (a) may also use highways not specified in subdivision (a) ~~which~~  
27 *that* provide reasonable access to terminals and facilities for  
28 purposes limited to fuel, food, lodging, and repair when that access  
29 is consistent with the safe operation of the combinations of vehicles  
30 and when the facility is within one road mile of identified points  
31 of ingress and egress to or from highways specified in subdivision  
32 (a) for use by those combinations of vehicles.

33 (d) The Department of Transportation or local authorities may  
34 establish a process whereby access to terminals or services may  
35 be applied for upon a route not previously established as an access  
36 route. The denial of a request for access to terminals and services  
37 shall be only on the basis of safety and an engineering analysis of  
38 the proposed access route. If a written request for access has been  
39 properly submitted and has not been acted upon within 90 days of  
40 receipt by the department or the appropriate local agency, the

1 access shall be deemed automatically approved. Thereafter, the  
2 route shall be deemed open for access by all other vehicles of the  
3 same type regardless of ownership. In lieu of processing an access  
4 application, the Department of Transportation or local authorities  
5 with respect to highways under their respective jurisdictions may  
6 provide signing, mapping, or a listing of highways as necessary  
7 to indicate the use of specific routes as terminal access routes. For  
8 purposes of this subdivision, “terminal” means either of the  
9 following:

10 (1) A facility where freight originates, terminates, or is handled  
11 in the transportation process.

12 (2) A facility where a motor carrier maintains operating  
13 facilities.

14 (e) Nothing in subdivision (c) or (d) authorizes state or local  
15 agencies to require permits of terminal operators or to charge  
16 terminal operators fees for the purpose of attaining access for  
17 vehicles described in this section.

18 (f) Notwithstanding subdivision (d), the limitations of access  
19 specified in that subdivision do not apply to licensed carriers of  
20 household goods when directly enroute to or from a point of  
21 loading or unloading of household goods, if travel on highways  
22 other than those specified in subdivision (a) is necessary and  
23 incidental to the shipment of the household goods.

24 (g) ~~(1) Notwithstanding Sections 35400 and 35401, the~~  
25 ~~Department of Transportation or local authorities, with regard to~~  
26 ~~highways under their respective jurisdictions, may, upon~~  
27 ~~application, issue a special permit authorizing the applicant to~~  
28 ~~operate a combination of vehicles consisting of a truck tractor~~  
29 ~~semitrailer combination operated pursuant to subdivision (a) with~~  
30 ~~a kingpin to rearmost axle measurement limit of not more than 46~~  
31 ~~feet on trailers used exclusively or primarily in connection with~~  
32 ~~motorsports. Notwithstanding Sections 35400 and 35401, a~~  
33 ~~combination of vehicles consisting of a truck tractor and~~  
34 ~~semitrailer, or of a truck tractor, semitrailer, and trailer, is exempt~~  
35 ~~from all limitations on the length of trailers if the trailer is~~  
36 ~~exclusively or primarily used in connection with motorsports. As~~  
37 ~~used in this paragraph, subdivision, “motorsports” means any an~~  
38 ~~event, and all activities leading up to that event, including, but not~~  
39 ~~limited to, administration, testing, practice, promotion, and~~  
40 ~~merchandising, that is sanctioned under the auspices of the member~~

1 organizations of the Automobile Competition Committee for the  
2 United States.

3 ~~(2) A local authority, as a condition of issuing a special permit~~  
4 ~~under this subdivision, may establish reasonable controls on the~~  
5 ~~allowable hours of operation of those semitrailers that are~~  
6 ~~authorized to operate under this subdivision.~~

7 (h) The Legislature finds and declares both of the following:

8 (1) In authorizing the use of 53-foot semitrailers, it is the intent  
9 of the Legislature to conform with Section ~~2311(b)~~ *3111(b)(1)(C)*  
10 of Title 49 of the United States Code by permitting the continued  
11 use of semitrailers of the dimensions as those that were in actual  
12 and legal use on December 1, 1982, and does not intend this action  
13 to be a precedent for future increases in the parameters of any of  
14 those vehicles that would adversely affect the turning  
15 maneuverability of vehicle combinations.

16 ~~(2) In authorizing the department to issue special transportation~~  
17 ~~permits for motorsports, In exempting trailers used exclusively or~~  
18 ~~primarily for motorsports from limitations on the length of trailers,~~  
19 it is the intent of the Legislature to conform with Section  
20 ~~31111(b)(1)(E)~~ *(F)* of Title 49 of the United States Code. It is also  
21 the intent of the Legislature that this action not be a precedent for  
22 future increases in the distance from the kingpin to the rearmost  
23 axle of semitrailers that would adversely affect the turning  
24 maneuverability of vehicle combinations.